



**Christ Our Model.
Children Our Focus.**

News Release

Annual LCSD Girls' Retreat

BONNYVILLE, AB (February 3, 2020) - Girls from across Lakeland Catholic School Division (LCSD) had the opportunity to participate in the sixth annual all girls retreat last weekend. The retreat is for girls in grades 5-12 with students in grades 7-12 having the option to stay overnight.

The retreat began on Friday, January 31 at 6:00 pm at École Notre Dame High School in Bonnyville and it ran until the next day at noon. On Friday evening there were fifty girls participating with thirty two of the girls staying overnight.

Staff engaged the girls in a number of reflective and group activities designed to bring them closer. In addition to the fun and games, organizers held open question and answer sessions and led the group through worship.

Siobhan Penner, a teacher and Youth Minister at École Notre Dame High School, is the main organizer of the event. She said, "We watched students unite in knowing they are not alone in the struggles that they



face. God is with them and their struggles are not the first or last of their kind. We must learn to work together through our hardships, seek advice from God and those who have been victorious before us, and then, use our experience to reach out to others when we see them in similar situations so that no one ever feels alone."



The culminating task of the retreat was broken into four categories based on the areas in the girls' lives where they have been victorious (The Big Cook - making fifty meals for those in

need in the community), circumstance (preparing personal hygiene bags for the Dragonfly Centre), bullying (positive affirmations posted on every locker at their school),

or loneliness (thirty-six jars of friendship soup). These tasks allowed the girls to come together and prepare meals or put together supplies to donate to families in the community, as well as to make the school a more welcoming place.

Through the activities and tasks they were given to complete, the girls were able to see that there are others who have faced challenges similar to their own. As a result, many of the girls left with new friends, and an understanding that whatever challenges they face, they can overcome them victoriously.

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